

Looking Unto Jesus (Part 2)

Hebrews 12: 1-3

This morning we began to look at this passage. I want to pick up where we left off. I trust that the Lord will continue to speak to our hearts as we look unto Jesus while running the race of life.

I. The Testimony of the Saints (1a)

A. They were Persecuted

B. They were Persistent

C. They were Presented

II. The Trial of the Saved (1b)

A. Involves Preparation – let us lay aside every weight

B. Involves Purification – and the sin which doth so easily beset us

C. Involves Participation – Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and **let us run with patience the race that is set before us**. It is apparent that if we are to finish the race, we must run the race. We will never reach the mark that God has set for us if we fail to participate in the work that He has called us to do. [Philip.3:14](#) – I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. [2 Tim.4:7](#) – I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Paul could not have made that statement at the end of life had he not continued to press toward the mark of God. He stayed in the race as we must also. I want to consider a couple of important aspects of our participation in this race.

1. The Commission – let us run with patience. There is a race to be run, but it must be ran in the right manner. The Lord has called us to run the race with **patience**. This means “*steadfastness, constancy, endurance, and patience.*” It pictures one who is not deterred from a deliberate purpose. It is a runner who has his eye on the finish line and is determined to finish his course. He is not deterred by the distractions along the way or the temptation to abandon the race prior to the finish.

- The course of life is filled with those who started the race, but never reached the goal. Somewhere along the line they were distracted or hurt and dropped out rather than choosing to press on. I have watched it over the years. I have seen people come and go when it comes to serving the Lord. Some started out strong and ran well for a season, but something happened along the way and they are no longer in the race. I am sure that there are those who used to attend this church that was faithful in the race, but they are not here tonight. In fact they are not in the race anywhere. They have fallen by the wayside and dropped out.
- We all face that danger. Some who are still attending are not running the race. They are going through the motions, but they are not gaining any ground. We must guard against that ourselves. We are no better than they are; we too could find ourselves watching from the sidelines of life rather than participating in the race.
- This is a race that isn't necessarily for the swift, but the strong. The adversary will see to it that you face opposition along the way, and the closer you get to the goal, the more intense the fight. There is no place to quit or give up. We have not been called to do the best we can; we have been called to run the race with patience.

2. The Course – [let us run with patience the race that is set before us](#). This is something that we have difficulty accepting. We must run the race that is set before us. We don't have the privilege of choosing our course or charting our own way. I am glad that I don't have that privilege. We would certainly make a mess of our lives if it were up to us to set the course. But, our nature doesn't like to walk a path that we have not chosen. That is just part of serving the Lord. We have been purchased by Him and we are here to honor Him with the lives that we live.

- Many today are no longer in the race because they refused to run where God had planned. It isn't always easy within our flesh to follow the path that the Lord has chosen for us, but it is always the best and it will always be secure. We may not be able to see around the next curve or across the next hill, but as long as we are walking the path that God designed we are in His will. I want to run where Jesus desires rather than where I choose. As long as I am running His course, He will be there to guide my steps and provide my needs.
- Are you resigned to walking as the Lord leads? Have you surrendered your life to His will? The saved are promised a home in heaven, but if we are to finish the course, we must run the race that is set before us.

I. The Testimony of the Saints (1a)

II. The Trial of the Saved (1b)

III. The Triumph of the Savior (2) – [Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.](#)

This race is often difficult and we are tempted to quit. It would be impossible to achieve within ourselves. We have considered those who prevailed before us. They too faced great adversity, but they finished the course. All who have ever finished the race have done so by the help of the Lord. He set the standard. He was found faithful and endured till the end. If we are to finish this race, we must look to the Lord and follow His lead. I want to take a moment to consider the Champion who went before us.

A. His Example – We are encouraged to [look unto Jesus](#). He is to be the focal point of our lives. A runner will never be successful if he loses focus. He must keep his eyes on the course, watching the race as it unfolds. So it is with our Christian journey. We must keep our focus. We must keep our eyes upon the Lord. He is the example we are to follow and we must focus our attention on Him.

- Many have missed the mark and strayed from the course due to a lack of focus. It is often easy to look at the difficulties rather than the obligations. It is often easy to focus on the storm rather than the Savior. Many times we look at the mountain we must climb or the valley that we face rather than looking to the Lord for guidance and strength. Peter was walking a good course on the water until he took his eyes off of Jesus. When he lost his focus, he began to sink. We must keep our eyes upon the Lord.

B. His Experience – [Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith](#). He is the Author and the Finisher of our faith. What a comfort that we find in God's Word. We are not running a course of uncertainty. We have not set sail without direction or hope of completion. Jesus is the Creator, the [Author](#) of our faith. He is the foundation, the Cornerstone. We are secure in Him. He fully walked the path that the Father had chosen for Him. He walked that path free of sin and pleasing unto God. Jesus set the course that we must follow. We have the assurance that we need because of the path that Christ already traveled.

- He is also the [Finisher](#) of our faith. He fully satisfied the righteous demands of the Father. He fulfilled the plan of redemption as He offered Himself a ransom upon the cross. He came as a Man, and yet He was fully God. He completed His course.

- We have hope in our journey because the Lord has already gone before us. He has walked the path that we must travel. He has experienced the difficulties and hardships that we must face. He overcame and we can too by faith in Christ our Lord.

C. His Endurance – [who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame](#). We cannot begin to imagine the agony that Jesus endured while He walked this road of life. He was born into poverty, having no place to lay His head. He was despised and rejected of those He came to save, even His own family. He was accused of being a false prophet possessed of the devil. He was abandoned by His own, denied by one of His closest friends. He stood before the council and was condemned of crimes He had not committed. He was led away as a common criminal, beaten and crucified.

- Jesus did all that [for the joy that was set before Him](#). He endured all of the suffering to redeem fallen man. He knew that He was the only means of salvation. He knew that apart from His sacrifice that mankind would be forever condemned in sin. Jesus suffered the sins of mankind and faced the wrath of God for our benefit.
- When I consider all that Jesus endured, and faced it with joy, I am convicted over my petty complaints. We have not suffered unto death. We have not faced the whipping post because of our faith. Surely we can face the minor trials and hardships that come our way. We ought to be able to face them with joy because we belong to Him!

D. His Exaltation – [Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God](#). Our Lord has already completed His course. That course led Him to an old rugged cross where He died for our sin. They placed His body within a borrowed tomb and sealed it with a stone. His followers mourned at His death, but the grave couldn't hold Him. He rose from the grave and ascended back to heaven where He is seated at the right hand of God.

- Our course has been set by He who is victorious. We are not following one who charted a good course. We are following the One who set the only course. He isn't just a way; He is the Way.
- We are not serving and hoping in one who is dead leaving only a memory to follow. We are serving One who is alive and well, fully capable of securing our eternal destination.
- There have been times in life when I have strayed off course. There have been times when I just quit running altogether, but my Lord would not leave me in that condition. He came to me and picked me up, placing me back in the race. Often it is hard and we grow weary, but Jesus is there to see us through. As long as we follow Him, we will make it through.

I want to close tonight with [v.3 – For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds](#). Jesus endured much as He walked upon this earth, but He never gave up. He could've refused the cross. He could've called the angels of heaven to deliver Him, but He bore it for us.

You may be here tonight thinking of throwing in the towel and abandoning the race. You may be wondering if it is worth it. Consider what Jesus endured that we might have life and be forgiven. We cannot make it in and of ourselves, but through Him we can. Why not come and seek His grace and help in your life. He doesn't want you to drop out; He wants you to endure till the end.